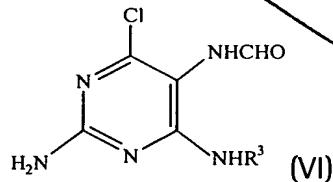


comprising reacting a compound of formula (VI)



wherein R³ is as defined above, with a trialkylorthoformate in the presence of an aqueous acid.

REMARKS

Claims 9, 18, and 22 have been amended for clarification. Support for the amendment is provided at page 10 of the specification and Example 8. Claims 9 and 18 – 22 are currently pending.

It is respectfully submitted that the present application is ready for examination on the merits. An early consideration and notice of allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen L. Prus".

Karen L. Prus, Ph.D.
Attorney for Applicant
Reg. No. 39,337

Date: *October 17, 2000*

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